

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
Regular Meeting – March 10, 2014 @ 7:00 pm  
Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT**

**Present:** Ann Astarita, Marjorie Cramer, Bill Darrin, Steven Gogliettino, Joe Hovious, Karlyn Sturmer and Mary Gaudet-Wilson; **Staff Present:** Tammy Hazen, Clerk

**These Minutes are subject to the approval of the Conservation Commission**

The Public Meeting was then called to order at 7:01 pm.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** – None

**CORRESPONDENCE** – Ms. Astarita opened discussion regarding a letter from CT DEEP for a modified permit application by Planters Choice regarding a change of the amount of water being pulled per day from the Pootatuck Aquifer. There is no information available about the original application. Ms. Astarita felt this was an Inland Wetlands Commission issue but that the Conservation Commission holds more of an advisory role. Mr. Hovious asked if there was ever an opportunity for the commission to review the initial application.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Mr. Darrin motioned to approve the minutes of 2/25/14. Ms. Cramer seconded the motion. Under Legislative Subcommittee, instead of “punish”, change to “hold accountable”.

**ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

Review of Other Commissions: Board of Selectmen approved the open space purchase and Parks and Rec’s budget. Mr. Hovious noted that Carl Samuelson’s report noted there had been some clearing of trails and meadows with no specification of location.

Task List: Ms. Astarita asked the commission for their opinion of adding two columns, one for “costs” and one for “priority.” The priorities would be in a category of 1, 2, or 3. Some items are updated immediately below and others in Old Business.

OS 37-3-14 between the railroad tracks and Deep Brook: Ms. Wilson said they are meeting on this at 8:30 am on 3/11/14.

Website: Ms. Sturmer said the domain name has been registered by “Ask Joanne, LLC”. The subcommittee will begin working on organizing and determining content.

Pole Bridge Preserve Brochure: Ms. Hazen will send this to the printers for 200 brochures and four blown up larger and laminated for the kiosk and for Earth Day and other events.

Budget: Mr. Gogliettino has been researching grants but has not been able to find out information on funding availability from the Town’s budget. The commissioners discussed avenues in order to get funding for invasive removal and noted the importance of maintaining the investment of open space.

**OLD BUSINESS AND ACTION ITEMS**

Fairfield Hills / High Meadow: Ms. Wilson reiterated the purpose of the Declaration Document to be approved by the Board of Selectmen. The Planning and Zoning Commission determined that the high and east meadows be declared as open space in perpetuity subject to approval of the final declaration document by the Board of Selectman. Mr. Benson then approached the commission to draft the document. Mr. Benson will bring the

Declaration Document before the Board of Selectmen for approval. Ms. Wilson met with Mr. Benson to review the content and discussed specifics, including the approval process.

Ms. Astarita said Mr. Benson asked for a list of events and uses the commission feels should be prohibited or permitted for the meadows. Ms. Wilson felt that they may need to be approved on a case-by-case basis. There is a meeting on Friday morning with Mr. Benson to discuss this as well as the Fairfield Hills trails. Mr. Hovious then opened discussion regarding trails and the wetlands in the high meadow. Ms. Astarita said her concern was that the trails on the Stantec map showed 10 foot wide paved (impermeable) trails. Ms. Astarita felt the change to the mowing regime should come from Land Use. The commission will provide information why this should change.

Conservation Easements: Updates to the list of conservation easements continue to be made.

Meadow on 38-9-34, Riverside Road: No update.

Earth Day Participation: Ms. Wilson is working on a handout about invasives (handling, removal and disposal). She asked for creative ideas from the commission. Ms. Hazen will have a large map of open space printed. Raffles and giveaways will be planned. Mr. Hovious the DEEP bookstore has great things for kids. Ms. Hazen will get copies of the Meadows brochure, the Wetlands tri-fold and the Pole Bridge Preserve brochure to the printers (approx. 200 copies each). The commissioner asked also for four Pole Bridge Preserve brochures blown up and laminated for the kiosk and display at events.

NCC Strategic Plan: Tammy to send this out electronically and make copies.

## **SUBCOMMITTEES**

Open Space Inventory and Maintenance Subcommittee: Ms. Hazen will get the updates completed.

Invasives Subcommittee: No updates.

Legislative Subcommittee: Ms. Wilson opened discussion regarding legislation on Bamboo. The new bill needs to go through a legal process. The commission discussed efforts needed to provide education on this. This will be discussed further at the next meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS** – Ms. Wilson asked Pat Boily, the Chair of the Biology Department at Western CT State University, if he may have students interested in working on a meadows initiative (Butterfly, bee sanctuary/habitat). The commission will write a proposal.

**STAFF REPORT** – None

**EXECUTIVE SESSION** – Mr. Hovious motioned to go into Executive Session at 8:35 pm to discuss purchases of open space. Mr. Darrin seconded the motion which was unanimously approved. Ms. Astarita motioned to adjourn Executive Session at 9:13 pm, which was seconded by Ms. Wilson and unanimously approved.

Ms. Astarita motioned to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Ms. Cramer and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 9:14 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Tammy Hazen